

A POLITICAL QUESTION.

Statehood for New Mexico In the Balance.

Its Admission Will Depend On the Result of the Coming Election.

Probably before the next issue of THE EAGLE comes from the press, congress will have adjourned and the last glimmer of hope that the senate will pass the bill for the admission of New Mexico into the union, at this session, will have disappeared.

Although New Mexico has been knocking for admission into the union for forty years and bills for its admission have passed both houses of congress at different times, it appears now as though its admission depended on the result of the election in November.

The democratic majority in the senate is very narrow and it is liable to be reduced rather than increased after the next session of congress. The democrats in the senate are moving cautiously and I do not think that the democrats of that branch of the New Mexico legislature care to act on the bill for the admission of New Mexico until they are satisfied that the territory is safely democratic. This, I admit, is not justice to the people of New Mexico, but the rights of the residents of this territory are not to be considered in this matter. The only question in relation to the bill for the admission of New Mexico which democratic senators are considering are those in relation to the politics of the territory.

The fitness of New Mexico for admission to the union was years ago determined in the affirmative, when, at different times, a majority of both houses voted to admit the territory. The situation with regard to the admission of this territory is not different from the conditions surrounding other territories which have been admitted in recent years. The party in power has admitted those territories which it was believed would strengthen the party in congress and help in the electoral college. Territories having less population, less wealth, smaller area and fewer natural resources than New Mexico have been admitted into the union by the republicans when they were in power and, at the same time New Mexico was refused admission.

Since 1882 New Mexico has been safely democratic, but at the election two years ago Joseph's majority was much smaller than it had been in any previous election and that fact has doubtless had some influence on the action of the democratic senate. I do not doubt that senators have fears that the territory is too evenly balanced politically to risk the

possibility of its sending two republican senators to Washington who would, in all probability, wipe out or nearly wipe out the narrow majority which the democrats will have in the senate after the 3rd of next March.

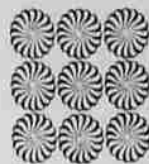
Whether the reduced majority at the last election was on account of a change in political sentiment or a loss of popularity on the part of Delegate Joseph can only be told after the next election. If the territory goes democratic by a safe majority I believe the senate will hasten to pass the bill for the admission of New Mexico into the union but if, on the other hand, the territory should go republican, the bill which is now before the senate, favorably reported, will not be acted upon. If it is reasonably certain that the number of democrats in the senate will be increased by the admission of New Mexico, the territory will be admitted, but if a republican delegate should be elected at the coming election, I believe that statehood would still be a long way off for New Mexico.

President Cleveland has admitted the justice of the claims of New Mexico for admission and there is not the slightest doubt but that he would sign the bill promptly should it be passed by congress. As the bill stands now it will have to go back to the house after having passed the senate because there have been some changes made in the house bill by the senate committee on territories, but it could be reached on the house calendar if the senate does not delay its action on the bill too long. The next session of congress is a short one, its entire duration being only three months, and some time will be lost in the customary holiday vacation so that there will really be no more than ten weeks of actual work.

During the forty-third congress a bill for the admission of New Mexico passed both houses of congress. The bill passed the house by a vote of 160 to 54 on May 21, 1874, and at the second session of that congress, on the 24th day of February, 1875, the bill, with some slight amendments, passed the senate by a vote of 32 to 11 but it reached the house so late in the session that it was not considered in that body. When it passed the senate there was but a week of the session remaining and in the rush of the closing session it could not be brought up in the house. Just such a situation may present itself during the coming session of this congress but it is hardly probable. If the territory should be safely democratic I do not think that the senate would lose any time after its meeting in December in passing the bill for the admission of New Mexico, and it could then be reached by the house in ample time. The democratic majority there is large enough to take the bill up and pass it promptly.

The democrats of the territory in convention assembled next month at Las Cruces should select the best and strongest man in the party for candidate for delegate at the next election as upon a good democratic majority, in my opinion, hangs the only hope of statehood for New Mexico for some time to come.

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